

**Opening Statement of  
Chairman Henry J. Hyde  
Before the Full Committee Hearing  
“North Korea’s Nuclear Test: Next Steps?”  
Wednesday, November 15, 2006**

Ambassador Burns, we are pleased to have you here today. You are highly regarded as one of America’s most distinguished diplomats. We look forward to hearing your observations on your recent trip to East Asia. We hope you can provide the Congress with definitive information on how the Administration, in consultation with our Allies, plans to address the North Korean nuclear crisis.

Let me also take this opportunity to offer congratulations to the former South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon (**BON KEY-MOON**) and to the Korean people on the occasion of his election as the UN’s new Secretary-General. This event is a source of pride for Koreans worldwide as they reflect on how their nation rose from the ashes of war to become a major diplomatic player on the world stage. It is also particularly fitting to have as the UN’s new leader a representative of a nation which owes its very existence as a free and sovereign state to the stalwart actions of the United Nations in 1950.

I understand, Ambassador Burns, that you and your South Korean and Japanese counterparts stated in Seoul last week that, “North Korea will not be recognized as a nuclear weapon state.” But, in reality, isn’t the nuclear genie already out of the bottle? Aren’t we really talking about how to get that genie back inside the bottle, which is a very difficult task?

Everyone has said that China holds the key to reining in a nuclear North Korea. Many have been enthusiastic about Beijing’s surprisingly constructive attitude. The Japanese press reported that Beijing even cut temporarily the flow of oil across the Yalu River. These drips of oil, instead of the usual steady flow, were meant to send a clear message to the North Korean regime to cease its provocative behavior.

We can all thank the Chinese Government for pressuring North Korea back to the Six-Party Talks – although a date certain for resumption remains to be designated. But we should never forget that Beijing always acts skillfully and practically in its own national interest. The Chinese leaders saw clearly that the situation on the Korean peninsula was getting out of hand.

A number of Japanese and South Korean observers have cautioned the Committee that we should not be too effusive in our praise of Beijing. They advise that we should be on guard against outsourcing the North Korean nuclear problem entirely to Beijing.

If Beijing becomes the key player in resolving the North Korean nuclear issue while we are engaged elsewhere, I fear potential long-term, dire consequences. As I told

former Deputy Secretary Zoellick last May when he sat where Ambassador Burns now sits, I fear that a future American generation may awaken from its Pacific slumber to find our influence removed entirely from the Asian mainland. Then a politically unreformed and assertive China could be calling the shots in the most vibrant economic region of the world. These remain my parting words of caution to America's Asia policymakers.

I have also read press reports that our South Korean ally has been less than stalwart in supporting sanctions and the other tough measures which may be needed to rein in Kim Jong Il. But we should not be concerned. We have the word of no less a figure than the South Korean President himself. President Roh (**ROW**) visited the Capitol in September and was asked by my good friend Tom Lantos what would be his government's reaction to a North Korean nuclear test. He pledged a firm reaction, including the likely use of sanctions. The House leadership was all there, including the Speaker and Ms. Pelosi. We are confident that President Roh is a man of his word and will keep his pledge to the Congress.

Finally, if diplomacy fails, we would like to hear your thoughts on implementing inspection of North Korean ships under the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), something which our South Korean ally reportedly does not support. Interdiction of North Korean ships suspected of carrying WMD materials would not be without risk as Pyongyang has stated publicly such measures would constitute an "act of war." And, as Korea is a peninsula, not an island, the three nations sharing a land border with North Korea – China, Russia and South Korea – must be fully engaged. Without their support in inspecting contraband crossing their respective frontiers, naval inspections could prove risky, yet largely ineffective.

I understand we have been in discussions with Australia and Japan, in particular, concerning possible naval inspections. Hopefully, policymakers have considered the delicate history of the region with regard to any inspection support from Japan. I am concerned that we would cause alarm among the South Korean populace if Tokyo had too visible a role in inspection of any Korean ships, even if from the North.

I now turn to my good friend Tom Lantos for his opening remarks.